

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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SSO-00 NSCE-00 SP-02 PM-03 DODE-00 MC-01 ACDA-10
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O 130905Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4234

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 STOCKHOLM 2696

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, SW, IN, US, PK
SUBJECT: SOME INITIAL COMMENTS ON THE VIGGEN DECISION AND
US-SWEDISH RELATIONS

1. SEVEN DAYS HAVE NOW PASSED SINCE SWEDES WERE INFORMED BY UNDER-SECRETARY BENSON OF US DECISION ON THE VIGGEN. WE HAVE WAITED FOR REACTION BUT IT HAS BEEN SLOW DEVELOPING, QUITE POSSIBLY BECAUSE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT HAS HAD DIFFICULTY IN DECIDING ON A COURSE OF ACTION. THIS SLOWNESS TO REACT IS ALSO AFFECTED BY FACT THAT MUCH OF THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT IS ON VACATION (THE CUSTOM IS FOR MUCH MORE OF A WHOLESAL JULY EXODUS THAN IS THE CASE IN THE US) WHILE THE LACK OF A PRESS LEAK EITHER IN THE US OR HERE HAS AFFORDED MORE TIME. THIS MESSAGE IS INTENDED TO REVIEW WHAT INFORMATION ON THE DEVELOPING SWEDISH ATTITUDE IS AVAILABLE TO US AND TO HAZARD SOME OPINIONS ON HOW THE SWEDES WILL RESPOND.

2. ASIDE FROM KNUT THYBERG'S INITIAL STATEMENT THAT THE US DECISION COULD NOT FAIL TO AFFECT OUR
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BILATERAL RELATIONS (STOCKHOLM 2635) THE ONLY OFFICIAL REACTION HAS BEEN THE DESK OFFICER'S MESSAGE TO THE DCM ON CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE AND IMPLYING THAT A HIGH LEVEL SWEDISH RIPOSTE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING SOON.

3. MEANWHILE, SAAB SCANIA DIRECTOR PETER WALLENBERG

HAS EXPRESSED TO ME HIS PROFOUND DISTRESS OVER THE DECISION AND EMOTIONALLY INDICATED AN INTENTION TO CONTINUE FIGHTING SOMEHOW FOR A REVERSAL. WALLENBERG CLAIMED THAT TOP LEVELS OF THE GOS WERE DEBATING HOW TO RESPOND, IMPLYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO REACH AGREEMENT. MEANWHILE, A KNOWLEDGEABLE FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE SAYS THAT AMBASSADOR WACHTMEISTER IS BEING ASKED TO PARTICIPATE LATE THIS WEEK IN A HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON HOW TO RESPOND TO THE US DECISION. TO DATE THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION WHATSOEVER OF A US DECISION, MUCH LESS SWEDISH COMMENT, IN THE PRESS HERE.

4. ALTHOUGH SOME POLITICAL AND INDUSTRIAL QUARTERS ARE OBVIOUSLY QUITE ANGRY, WE EXPECT THE EVENTUAL OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO BE MEASURED AND CAREFULLY CALCULATED TO CONVEY SWEDISH IRRITATION ON THE ONE HAND WHILE KEEPING THE DOOR OPEN TO A STABLE, ESSENTIALLY FRIENDLY BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP ON THE OTHER. THERE MAY WELL BE SOME DISTANCE IN OFFICIAL SWEDISH ATTITUDES FOR A TIME, OF COURSE, AND A GENUINE SWEDISH SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF SUPPLY FOR TECHNOLOGY. THERE ARE VAST AREAS WHERE THE US WILL BE NEEDED, HOWEVER, AND THE SWEDES WILL TAKE CARE NOT TO CUT THESE OFF.

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5. IT SEEMS CLEAR TO US THAT THE PROFESSIONAL LEVELS OF THE MFA HAVE BEEN REALISTIC ALL ALONG AS TO THE PROBABLE OUTCOME IN THE US AND ARE BOTH LESS SURPRISED THAN THE POLITICAL LEVELS AND MORE INCLINED TOWARD A CAUTIOUS AND RESTRAINED RESPONSE. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THIS POSITION WILL BE ADOPTED.

6. FUTURE US POSTURE. WE BELIEVE THE POSTURE PROJECTED IN THE US PRESS GUIDANCE (STATE 172358) IS JUST RIGHT AND WE WILL BE EMPHASIZING HERE THE PRINCIPAL POINTS THAT THE VIGGEN DECISION REFLECTS OUR OVERALL ARMS TRANSFER POLICY, THAT IT WAS A DIFFICULT DECISION AND THAT IT IS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST SWEDEN. KNOWLEDGEABLE SWEDES, PARTICULARLY SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS, ARE ALREADY PREPARED TO ACCEPT THESE POINTS, DISAPPOINTED THOUGH THEY MAY BE. THE TASK OF CONVINCING LESS SOPHISTICATED ELEMENTS OF THE HONESTY OF THIS BROADER US RATIONALE (HOWEVER MUCH THEY TOO REGARD THE DECISION AS UNWISE) WILL HAVE TO BE CARRIED BY THESE MORE SOPHISTICATED SWEDISH ELEMENTS THEMSELVES. WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE US IS TO SHOW PATIENCE IF THERE ARE

SOME FITS OF ANGER FROM SOME QUARTERS AND TO TAKE
SUCH COMPENSATORY MEASURES AS MAY BE AVAILABLE. EVEN
IF OUR ALTERNATIVES CAN ONLY BE LARGELY COSMETIC,
IT WILL BE IMPORTANT THAT THEY BE TAKEN.

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4235

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 STOCKHOLM 2696

LIMDIS

7. I AM THINKING HERE OF VISITS AND CONTACTS, OF
COURSE, AND THREE POSSIBILITIES PRESENT THEMSELVES:
AN OFFICIAL VISIT BY PRIME MINISTER FALLDIN ASSUMING
HE STILL WANTS IT (WE HAD SEVERAL STRONG IF INFORMAL
SIGNALS OF HIS DESIRE IN RECENT MONTHS), A VISIT BY
THE VICE PRESIDENT, PERHAPS NEXT SPRING, AND A
SPECIAL EFFORT TO ARRANGE A MEETING OF FOREIGN
MINISTER SODER WITH THE SECRETARY DURING THE UNGA
SESSION IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER. THESE THREE
POSSIBILITIES ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE BUT RATHER
MUTUALLY REINFORCING. A SODIER VISIT WITH THE
SECRETARY IS AN ESSENTIAL FIRST STEP AND SHOULD BE
SOUGHT BY US AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME WHETHER SHE
REQUESTS IT OR NOT--PARTICULARLY GIVEN HER
POSSIBLE RELUCTANCE TO ASK BECAUSE OF THE SECRETARY'S
INABILITY TO SEE HER DURING THE SSOD. THE FALLDIN
VISIT IS EVEN MORE DESIRABLE IN VIEW OF KNOWN
SWEDISH INTEREST AND OUR OWN STAKE IN ENCOURAGING THE
MORE FAVORABLE DIRECTIONS OF SWEDISH FOREIGN POLICY
UNDER HIS GOVERNMENT. MY VIEWS ON THE DESIRABILITY
OF A VISIT BY THE VICE PRESIDENT ARE WELL KNOWN
AND ARE REINFORCED BY THE RECENT US DECISION.

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8. IN CONCLUSION, I SHOULD ALSO NOTE SOME INCLINATION BY SWEDES TO PERCEIVE A GROWING US COOLNESS TOWARD THIS COUNTRY IN WHICH THE VIGGEN DECISION CAN BE SEEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CLOSING OF THE TRADE CENTER, DIFFICULTIES IN TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CASES AND LACK OF ACCESS BY SENIOR SWEDISH LEADERS TO THE ADMINISTRATION. THIS POINT SHOULD NOT BE OVEREMPHASIZED SINCE THE SWEDES IN GENERAL AND THE MFA, IN PARTICULAR, ARE QUITE SOPHISTICATED AND BY NO MEANS INCLINED TOWARD PARANOIA. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO CREATE AS GOOD AN ATMOSPHERE AS POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME EVEN LATENT SWEDISH SUSPICIONS AND TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR PLACING THE VIGGEN DECISION IN A BROADER PERSPECTIVE OF ONGOING SYMPATHY FOR LEGITIMATE SWEDISH NEEDS AND OUR DESIRE TO CONTINUE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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